

YOUTH ALLY PROGRAM BRIEF

The problem:

Family, domestic and sexual violence is a major health and welfare issue, disproportionately affecting women and young people.

It is the greatest health risk factor for women aged 25–44 – more so than smoking, alcohol and obesity. It is also the leading cause of homelessness and housing instability for children¹.

According to research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare², young women aged 15–19 are five times more likely to be victims of sexual violence than any other group. Meanwhile young men of the same age most likely to perpetrate that violence. And, increasingly, sexual assault includes distribution of nude or sexual images online or via mobile phones. Nine out of 10 sexual assaults by or against young people go unreported to the police³.

A global study of girls' experiences online found that two thirds of Australian girls and young women aged 15–25 have experienced abuse or harassment online, with most starting to experience harassment on social media at just 12 years of age. One in 5 young women have felt physically unsafe as a result.⁴

National research into young Australian's attitudes towards violence against women found that a sizeable minority hold attitudes that may contribute to violence against women.⁵ And, contrary to popular belief, young people do not have more positive attitudes to violence and gender equality than adults aged 25–64 years⁶.

The result of all this is that against women costs an estimated 21.7 billion dollars a year in Australia⁷.

The Youth Ally project is about creating solutions:

The good news is that domestic and family violence is preventable. Even a 10% reduction in violence has a significant impact. Preventing violence requires deep and lasting social transformation that cannot be tackled alone – that's why we need your support.

¹ Mission Australia. (2020). *Out of the shadows – Domestic and family violence: a leading cause of homelessness in Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/position-statements/Out-of-the-shadows>

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020). *Sexual assault in Australia - In focus*. Canberra: AIHW. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/sexual-assault-in-australia/contents/summary>

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020). *Sexual assault in Australia - In focus*. Canberra: AIHW. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/sexual-assault-in-australia/contents/summary>

⁴ Plan International. (2020). 'Social media is the new frontier for gendered violence, as biggest ever global study of girls' experiences online reveals endemic abuse and harassment'. Retrieved at <https://www.plan.org.au/media-centre/social-media-new-frontier-for-gendered-violence-as/>.

⁵ ANROWS. (2019). *Young Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality: Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)*.

⁶ ANROWS. (2019). *Young Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality: Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)*.

⁷ Price Waterhouse Cooper. (2015). *A high price to pay: The economic case for preventing violence against women*. Retrieved from <https://www.pwc.com.au/pdf/a-high-price-to-pay.pdf>

With you on board, the Youth Ally program has the potential to make a difference and contribute to a community that is inclusive and safe for all. We want you to join the Youth Ally movement across Queensland that sees young people taking the lead, modelling the right behaviour and demonstrating that they will not tolerate or perpetuate violence.

We all have a role to play in creating a culture that does not tolerate domestic and family violence. Together we can stop this abuse before it starts.

What will the Youth Ally program deliver?

The Youth Ally program is developed on current evidence from Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and primary prevention frameworks designed by Our Watch.

Through a one-day workshop, you will be provided with a foundational understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence, along with tools to collaborate and design violence prevention campaigns in your own community.

This training also builds skills to enable you to come together with your peers to create a local network of young people who are able to support each-other, through the impacts of violence.

What you'll get by being part of this project:

- A comprehensive one day training, with certificate at the end.
- Skills in recognising and preventing coercive and controlling behaviours in relationships
- Increased ability to navigate healthy relationships through respect, consent and being able to recognise red flags of gender inequality
- The ability to be an ally for your friends or loved ones who may be experiencing gender inequality or violence.
- Work as a group to plan and delivery an activity for your own community to prevent violence
- The opportunity to be part of real change
- Ongoing support via an online community of practice, with young people from other communities across Queensland.

Proposed *Youth Ally* program Locations

The Youth Councils invited to participate are:

- Townsville
- Fraser Coast
- Gladstone
- Aurukun
- Toowoomba